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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

U.S.: Syria a rogue state - Hurriyet
U.S. preparing sanctions on Syria - Aksam
U.S. getting tough on Damascus - Sabah
Bush Administration: Syria tests chemical weapons - Vatan
Tension rising in Kirkuk - Milliyet
Kirkuk a powder keg - Turkiye
Turkish liaison report: Kurds pulled back, nothing to worry
about - Hurriyet
Shalom pressures Ankara on Syria - Sabah
Life normalizing in Baghdad - Turkiye
Cultural heritage looted - Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

U.S. implies a new occupation - Cumhuriyet
U.S. stepping up tension with Syria - Zaman
Gul: We don't want a new war - Yeni Safak
General Franks: Syrian mercenaries in Iraq - Yeni Safak
Gul: U.S. wouldn't have let us into Northern Iraq - Radikal
U.S.: Saddam's last stronghold Tikrit under control -
Radikal
Tikrit falls, occupation completed - Yeni Safak
Barzani implies long U.S. stay may bring resistance - Zaman
Cultural heritage is destroyed - Cumhuriyet

FINANCIAL JOURNALS

Turkish businessmen roll up sleeves for Iraqi market - Dunya
Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project could be shelved -
Finansal Forum

BRIEFING

Iraq: Dailies continue reporting on the U.S.
Administration's accusations that Syria supports terrorism,
has tested chemical weapons, and is harboring high-level
Iraqi fugitives. Papers agree that Syrian President Bashar
Assad is the new target of the U.S. Israeli Foreign
Minister Silvan Shalom held a joint press conference in
Ankara with Turkish FM Abdullah Gul. Shalom asserted that
Damascus Airport has been a center for transferring arms and
ammunition to the Hizbullah. Disagreeing with Shalom, Gul
said that a new war in the region should be avoided, and
added that greater stability would serve everyone, including
Israel. Papers report that Ankara has decided to attend a
six-country summit meeting of Iran, Syria, Kuwait, Jordan,
Egypt and Lebanon to be hosted by Saudi Arabia to discuss
the reconstruction of Iraq. Dailies also give extensive
coverage to peshmerge attacks against Turkomen in Kirkuk.
The Turkomen appealed to American officers after a 12-year
old Turkomen boy was killed by Kurdish militiamen, but to no
avail. "Milliyet" reports the Turkomen are arming
themselves and claim that they will soon recruit 10,000
armed Turkomen. However, the MFA has found that Turkomen
claims conflict with reports provided by Turkish
intelligence officers in the area. KDP leader Barzani has
accused PUK leader Talabani of provoking widespread looting
by allowing his militia to enter Kirkuk, papers report. TGS
and MFA have warned the U.S. about the incidents in the
region. Foreign Minister Gul told "Radikal" that the
Americans would have objected to deployment of Turkish
troops in Northern Iraq even had Turkey opted for full
cooperation with the U.S. and the Kurds. The fact that
Turkish forces would not have been allowed to approach Mosul
and Kirkuk is the main reason that parliament rejected full

cooperation on March 1, according to Gul. Meanwhile, papers report KDP leader Barzani as saying that the U.S. should transfer Iraq's administration to federal rule as soon as possible. "No people would choose to live under constant occupation," Barzani said.

Israeli FM Shalom in Ankara: After receiving Israeli Foreign Minister Shalom, President Sezer said that Turkey could serve as a mediator for establishing peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Foreign Minister Gul advised his Israeli counterpart that Israel should refrain from opening new settlements on Palestinian land, and proposed a broad summit meeting on the Palestine-Israel conflict to be held in Istanbul. Gul and Shalom also discussed joint investments, tourism, and commercial cooperation between the two countries. A Turkish-Israeli agreement on the sale of Manavgat water is expected to be signed in May.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Is Syria next?

"What's America doing?"

Yilmaz Oztuna observed in conservative-mass appeal *Turkiye* (4/15): "It seems that the US intends to topple the Syrian Baath regime without the use of force. In the event of resistance from Damascus, US forces will enter Syria. . Next on the US priority list will be the Palestinian issue. Once this issue and other related problems are settled, the US will target Iran sometime next year. For that plan, the US needs both Turkey and Russia on its side. . US forces might remain in Iraq for a year or two. The American withdrawal from Iraq will take place after a friendly administration is established in the country. It is likely that the US will not intervene in the domestic politics of Iraq as long as the new Iraqi regime is pro-American and supportive of the US's oil and other interests. In the wake of this reshaping of the Middle East, Ankara needs a talented and capable team to handle the situation and make sure that Turkey will not be left out of the scene."

"Is Syria the next target?"

Fehmi Kuru argued in Islamic-intellectual *Yeni Safak* (4/15): "Even before the restructuring of Iraq, hawks in the US have launched another campaign for the implementation of the US global empire plan which was designed before the 2000 presidential elections. The philosophy of this plan is based on the US capability of conducting more than two wars simultaneously. Therefore we have started to see ultimatums and threats issued to other countries, including Syria. . Being threatened by the US does not necessarily happen because a country possesses weapons of mass destruction. Saddam, for instance, did not have WMD, and would not have been able to use them even if he had. But the US, despite the fact that the pretext for the Iraq war has proven false, continues to threaten Syria and Palestine. There will certainly be many others on that list. The helplessness and silence of the international community at this point is indeed horrifying."

PEARSON